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Myanmar Historical Commission

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Secretary of the
Myanmar Historical Commission

Golden Jubilee
1955-2005
နှစ်(၅၀)ပြည့်ရွှေရတု

Myanmar Historical Commission
Yangon

The Mingun Bell Inscription: The King as *Dhammaraja*[*]

Bodawpaya's reign of 37 years (1782-1819) straddling the 18th and 19th centuries was the last reign in which Myanmar was free of the pressures arising out of Western encroachment. In many ways it was a high noon of traditional Myanmar life and thought, with Buddhism underpinning and dominating much of it.

Bodawpaya himself was a king of strong religious inclinations. The *Hmannan Mahayazawindawgyi* (Glass Palace Chronicle) commissioned by his grandson and successor ten years after his death[1] noted:

> He administered the affairs of state for only seventeen years; after that he entrusted the affairs of state to his son the Crown Prince and his grandson Prince Sagaing and for twenty years he held a religious assembly in the forepart of the Royal Palace, discussing unceasingly day and night with learned monks, learned brahmins and learned men the elements and dispositions of merit and demerit, of mind, consciousness and matter, and of nibbana and the highest truth, and the elements and dispositions of astrological positions, the 27 lunar mansions and the divisions of time.[2]

Bodawpaya's religious inclinations found expression in a variety of ways, not least in the building and renovation of pagodas.[3] Of these, the one to which he gave his greatest attention was the building of the pagoda at Mingun which became known simply as the Great Royal Pagoda (Pahtodawgyi). Despite Bodawpaya making extended stays at Mingun to oversee the construction,[4] the Great Pagoda, the gold and silver bricks of whose plinth were laid on 9 January 1791, remained unfinished on the death of Bodawpaya 28 years later.[5] In connection with the Great Pagoda, Bodawpaya also made two giant lion figures of brick and mortar and cast a large bell known simply as the Great Royal Bell (Hkaunglaungdawgyi).

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[*] Paper read at the Conference, Texts and Contexts in Southeast Asia, organized by the Universities Historical Research Centre, 12-14 December 2001; published in *Texts and Contexts in Southeast Asia* Part I, Yangon: Universities Historical Research Centre, 2003.

Bodawpaya was also a king concerned with the maintenance of proper records. Because the registers of service groups on which royal service was based had been lost or destroyed during the capture of Inwa by the forces of Hanthawaddy in March 1752 and had not since been restored, Bodawpaya issued an order on 17 November 1783 which resulted in the compilation of new service registers.[6] Concerned with the integrity of religious lands, he ordered the collection of lithic inscriptions recording religious donations and had them re-inscribed.[7] Also concerned with the accuracy of the historical record, he had the chronicles revised to accord with lithic inscriptions and records.[8]

With the casting of the Great Bell, Bodawpaya also instructed that a record be made. The man who undertook the task was the octogenarian Twinthintaikwun Mahasithu U Tun Nyo (1726-1809). Born in 1726 in Maungdaung village, Mahasithu had been six years in monkhood when Alaungpaya (1752-1760) established his new dynasty. He left the monkhood to take service with Alaungpaya and, as a man who had already made his literary mark with the *Mudulakkhana pyo,* was assigned as a tutor to the young Bodawpaya.

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Mahasithu became a court poet but he was also the man Bodawpaya looked to for the maintenance of records. It was Mahasithu who, with Thetpan Atwinwun Yazabalakyawhtin U Htwa Byu (1736-1793), undertook the task of re-inscribing the old inscriptions of donation. It was Mahasithu who revised the chronicle and wrote the *Mahayazawinthit* (New Chronicle). And it was Mahasithu who wrote many of the inscriptions recording Bodawpaya's works of merit beginning with the Aungmyelawka Pagoda built on the site of his old residence in Sagaing on 20 March 1782.[9]

not famous M.Daung Sayadaw

As with the Great Pagoda there is a mystery with the Great Bell Inscription. Most bells have inscriptions inscribed on them but the Great Bell of Mingun--which was ferried across from the eastern side and hung near the still unfinished Great Pagoda in 1811[10]--has a surface noticeably bare. One of Mahasithu's duties was the making of inscriptions but his text does not seem to have been inscribed anywhere but remained on palm leaf.[11]

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1808

A text of mixed prose and verse, the Inscription gives the details of the casting of the Great Bell simply and briefly. The casting began on 13 May 1808[12], 10 *nayi* of the 2nd watch of the day (4:00 p.m.) and was completed on 17 May 1808, 6 *nayi* and 3 *pad* of the 2nd watch of the night (2:42 a.m.), the work taking 266 *nayi* and 3 *pad* (106 hrs 42 mins). In the casting 45,330 viss and 70 ticals (73, 045 kg) of wax was used and 65, 877 viss and 1 tical (107, 577 kg) of copper and 4,745 viss (7, 749 kg) of dross was smelted in 510 furnaces. The dimensions of the bell were: the height from rim to lion-pedestal, 7 cubits 1 *mait* 4 *thit* (3.43 m); the lion-pedestal, 1 cubit 4 *thit* (0.54 m); the lion-figures, 3 cubits 2 *mait* (1.67 m); the hanging rod (*baungdaing*), I cubit 4 *thit* (0.54 m); the diameter (at the rim), 11 cubits 4 *thit* (5.1 m) the circumference 33 cubits 1 *mait* 4 *thit* (15.31m).[13]

Although providing interesting details, the Inscription is more than a record of the casting of the Great Bell.[14] It is more truly a depiction of the Bell's donor Bodawpaya--through his personal accomplishments, his efforts in the promotion of Buddhism and the events of his reign--as a *dhammaraja*.

Perhaps the idea of the *dhammaraja* goes back into early Myanmar history to the arrival of Buddhism and its patronage by Myanmar kings. But the earliest incorporation of the word into the title of kings comes only with Kyansittha (1084-1113) of the Bagan dynasty who assumed the title Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā.[15] Kyansittha's reign also provides the first extended expression of the idea of the *dhammaraja*. In the form of a foretelling by the Buddha of the reign of Kyansittha, the Great Shwezigon Inscription declares:

> That Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall exalt the Religion of the Buddha. The fame of Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall prevail throughout the whole of Jambudipa. The firmness of Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā is like iron.
>
> Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall practise morality and righteousness. Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall have all malodorous immorality to be removed by the sweet scent of morality and righteousness. Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall have the uncleanness of all evil

> words, evil deeds, evil thoughts to be cleansed with the clean water of morality.
>
> All devas who are accorded the clasped hands of reverence by the multitude and bear the celestial staff made of the thunderbolt shall do the work of Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā in the manner of men performing their duties.
>
> The whole of the great kingdom of Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall be free of thieves who are as thorns. It shall be free of enemies who are as a thick forest. The kingdom shall be as extensive as the great ocean. The will of Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall be quickly accomplished....
>
> The King of the Devas Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall give rice to the multitude of people with his right hand. He shall give clothes to the multitude of people with his left hand. The multitude of people Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall look to their welfare as if they were the children of his breast. The people who are hard and stern Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall make polite. The people who are not in accord in act, word and thought Sritribhuvanādityadhammarājā shall make to be in accord.[16]

The vernacular rendition of *dhammaraja* as *tayamin (tryāmaṅ / taryāmaṅ)*-- representing an indigenization of the concept -- came a century later, an inscription of Queen Saw in 1241, for instance, making reference to her consort the King as "the *tryāmaṅ* named Narasingha Uccana."[17] And, as the idea of the *dhammaraja* made a fuller impact on Myanmar kingship and became dominant, the earlier reference to kings as *mingyi* (*maṅkrī*) or "great kings" was replaced by a reference to them as *mintaya* (*dhammarājā*).[18]

A number of Buddhist texts provided a basis for the idea of the *dhammaraja*,[19] but it is possible to think of the development of the idea over time as well as an interpretation of the idea by kings--and the scholars of their court--according to the circumstances of their reign.

In the Great Bell Inscription the idea of the *dhammaraja* is presented in its very preamble by an affirmation of the relationship between the King and Buddha, one of whose epithets is Dhammaraja:

This was done by the literary device of giving a dual translation of the Pali salutation of the preamble:

mahāvisayarājassa tam tam cakkam
vidham setvā patipekkham sukham deti
jotayam thatu cirassam

The first translation of this, in the "aspect of the Buddha" (*Buddhapakkha*), was:

> The Wheel of Dhamma (*dhammacakka*) of the All-seeing, Omniscient Dhammaraja (*tayamin*), Ruler of the Three Worlds, destroys all opposition and gives well-being to those who practise that Dhamma. May that Wheel of Dhamma, shining with the radiance of a myriad suns and moons, long endure!

The second translation, in the "aspect of the king" (*rājapakkha*), paralleled the first:

> The Wheel of Authority (*ānācakka*) of the Dhammaraja (*mintaya*), Lord of the White Elephants who has an extensive kingdom, destroys all enemies and gives well-being to the people of the kingdom. May that Wheel of Authority, shining with the radiance of a myriad suns and moons, long endure!

The relationship between King and Buddha affirmed in the preamble went back to the very origins of kingship The *Hmannan* relates → that when men fell into dispute with each other and disorder prevailed at the beginning of the present world-age, they met in assembly and decided on the appointment of a king to mete out all punishment.

> They approached and entreated the nascent Gotama Buddha who was endowed with the requisite appearance and marks, who had glory, power and authority, who had the strength to punish and reward and raised him up as king with the three anointings.[20]

The Inscription recalled this tradition of the nascent Gotama Buddha becoming king by popular acclaim in its account of Bodawpaya's accession to the throne.

Bodawpaya, the fourth of Alaungpaya's six sons by the Chief Queen, was in the line of succession according to Alaungpaya's wish that his sons succeed one another in order.[21] But he was displaced from it when Hsinbyushin (1763-1776) was succeeded by his son Singu (1776-1782) in 1776. Moreover, the contesting of that succession by Bodawpaya's elder brother Amyint resulted not only in the execution of Amyint but also in the exiling of Bodawpaya from Inwa, the capital, to nearby Sagaing. On 11 February 1782--taking advantage of Singu's absence from the capital and the confusion following a palace coup attempted the week before by another nephew, Phaungga--Bodawpaya seized the throne by force of arms.

The Inscription first noted Bodawpaya's innate virtue:

> Although he was endowed with the marks...which made him worthy of the wheel-treasure (*cakra ratna*)[22] he did not wish to be a king, but from his youth took delight only in liberality, good conduct and the teachings for the attainment of enlightenment. He was in the habit of adhering most strictly to the words of truth which nascent Buddhas always employ. Seeing the behaviour of men habituated and delighting in evil practices, he prayed that in whatsoever existence he might be in *samsara* he would be 100 *yojanas* away from the company of men who unlawfully took what was others' and for a full six years lived in the victory abode,[23] the pleasant city named Sagaing.

The Inscription then described how Bodawpaya became King:

> The words of entreaty of the four classes:[24]
> "It is now time to take possession of the realm
>   To establish a rule in line,
> Moved by compassion for the common people,
>   Seek, we implore, the people's well-being."
> The teaching of tradition:
> The Dhamma's threefold observance[25] which nascent Buddhas practise
>   Is like a roadway stretched out.
> Only if one walks along it unhesitatingly
>   Will one become a Buddha in whom Omniscience resides.
> With these two reasons in mind,

Like Mahājanaka[26] preserving his patrimony
He took possession of the whole kingdom
On Monday, 14th waning day of Tabodwe, Sakkaraj 1143
His radiant glory, the seal offered by the devas, 1811
Shone over Jambudipa.

The Inscription thus speaks of Bodawpaya as a nascent Buddha (*hpayalaung* / *alaung*) like the nascent Gotama Buddha who became king at the beginning of the world-age on the entreaty of the people, the assumption of kingship being a step in his progress towards Buddhahood. The idea of the king as a nascent Buddha perhaps goes back to the early history of Myanmar Buddhist kingship, but again textual evidence comes only with the Bagan inscriptions. The Great Shwezigon Inscription declares of Kyansittha:

> In his final existence also he shall pull out from the four nether worlds all beings who have gone to the four nether worlds. The spirits and [beings of] all worlds who are drowning in the great ocean of *samsara* and are without help he shall place on the great ship of Dhamma and convey to the harbour of Nibbana.[27]

Other inscriptions of the 13th century make specific mention of Sithu (the Alaungsithu of the chronicles, 1113-?), Nadaungmya also known as Uccana (1211-? 1231) and Kyaswa (1235-1249) as *hpayalaung* (*purhaloṅ*).[28]

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On 17 May 1783 Bodawpaya underwent the *muddhabhiseka* (head-anointing) ceremony which, as indicated in the *Hmannan* account of the triple anointing of the first king, represented the formal legitimation of kingship.[29] In the 460 days between his accession and the ceremony he founded the city of Amarapura--construction beginning on 30 December 1782--and the *muddhabhiseka* ceremony was performed within the setting of the move to the new city, the ceremonial move from Inwa to Amarapura being made on 12 May 1783 and the ceremony of taking possession of Amarapura being performed on 1 June 1783.[30]

On 2 June 1784 Bodawpaya took the unusual step of undergoing a second *muddhabhiseka* ceremony.[31] This was perhaps connected with his acquisition of a white elephant--one of the seven jewels (*ratna*) of the universal ruler (*cakravartin*)--which enabled Bodawpaya to assume the title "Lord of the White Elephant." The elephant was captured in Myothit forest and given the name Upaw Pyaungmon, the ceremony of "headwashing" being performed on 6 June 1784 and of "taking possession" on 8 June 1784.[32]

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The *muddhabhiseka* ceremony was an integral part of Myanmar kingship and the Inscription indicated its significance for Bodawpaya:

> In the manner of his ancestor the Dhammaraja Asoka who underwent the anointing ceremony and attained to the position of a universal sovereign (*ekarājā*) only after four years of cleansing the affairs of the kingdom, the Dhammaraja Lord of the Golden Palace who wished to accomplish righteously the affairs of the kingdom underwent the head-anointing ceremony which ordinary kings do not undergo....
>
> He took his seat cross-legged on the figwood dais twined with vines which was capable of creating a single king to rule over all Jambudipa. A right-whorled conch shell borne by a true princess, a silver conch shell borne by a Brahmin endowed with the five qualities[33] a jewel-encrusted conch shell borne by a rich merchant--these three conch shells were planted in succession on the head and the oath uttered, "Rule thou in accordance with the Dhamma! If with the Dhamma thy rule accords, may thy glory be great, thy life be long. If with the Dhamma it does not accord but deviates, may thy head be split into seven pieces!"[34]
>
> Fearlessly undergoing the pouring of the anointing water, he attained to the position of a universal sovereign deserving of the homage of a hundred umbrella-bearing kings.

3 conch shells

Some further light on the significance of the *muddhābhiseka* ceremony for Bodawpaya is provided by Mahasithu in his earlier Aungmyelawka Pagoda Inscription:

> The words of those who studied secular matters and said "It is not meet to receive the head-anointing" were not to his liking. So he examined and pondered, and based on the pronouncement,

"The knowledge of omniscient Buddhas of the Path of Arahantship is like unto the anointing of kings," and the pronouncement,

"That man who rules without receiving the anointing is no king at all (*rajasunya*)" [he underwent the anointing].[35]

Although Brahmanical in origin and still retaining Brahmanical elements, the *muddhabhiseka* ceremony was conceived in completely Buddhist terms--on the one hand, a commitment to the Dhamma and a further step in the development as a nascent Buddha and, on the other, a claim to universal rule. The latter aspect would have been particularly prominent in Bodawpaya's second anointing ceremony which was associated with the acquisition of a white elephant and in which the *mahādhammarājā* (Great King of Dhamma) of his earlier title, Sripavaratilokapanditamahādhammarājā was replaced with the *mahādhamma-rājādhirājā* (Great King of Kings of Dhamma) of the new, Sripavaravijayanantayasatribhavanādityādhipatipanditamahādhammarājādhirājā.

With Bodawpaya established as a proper *dhammaraja* by the *muddhābhiseka* ceremony, the Inscription went on to recount his early efforts to uphold the Dhamma. First, there was a brief mention of the settlement of the Ton-Yon controversy.[36] Then a description of the effort to improve the morality of monks by having them study and commit to memory the Aggikkhandopama Sutta, the two Patimokkhas and the monks Vibhanga,[37] and by denying to them such practices as rearing children of the village, accompanying funerals as attendants, making collections of gold and silver, and selling things received as offering to amass wealth like laymen. Finally, the Inscription related that just as missionaries had been sent out after the Third Council, monks learned in the Scriptures were sent out to the Shan country, Rakhine and other places, "making the splendour of the Religion shine brilliantly."[38] Regarding these efforts, the Inscription also noted, "In accordance with the saying that the wish of nascent Buddhas attains fulfillment every time that it is purposed, all that the King purposed concerning the Religion attained fulfillment."

From this aspect of Bodawpaya as the upholder of the Dhamma, the Inscription turned to the related aspect of Bodawpaya as the universal ruler endowed with great glory.

In October 1784 Bodawpaya sent the Crown Prince on a military campaign against the Rakhine Kingdom which resulted in the capture of Mrauk-u on 3 January 1785. Among the booty of war brought back to Amarapura was the Mahamuni Image, and on its arrival at Sagaing on 4 May 1785 Bodawpaya went out with a full military array and "went into the water up to his neck to welcome it".[39]

The Inscription gave this description of the arrival of the Mahamuni Image: Mahamu

> Wishing to carry to Bagan the Mahamuni Image which King Candasuriya had cast, with the addition of a variety of jewels, in the presence of the Buddha with Sakka supervising, Anawrahta arrived in Rakhine and made efforts to bear it away.
>
> The Image came in a dream and said, "O King!. I shall not go with you to the eastern country where you wish to take me. I shall go to the eastern country only when I am taken there by Metteyya who has been my elder brother."[40] Anawrahta gave up his effort and returned, saying, "It shall perhaps come to our country only when my descendant Metteyya appears."
>
> In Sakkaraj 1146 the King sent his son the Crown Prince with an army of ten million men and the Image, representation of the Buddha, named Mahamuni---arrived in the fair royal city of Amarapura amidst a greatly festive victory celebration.
>
> The people who saw these things vividly with their eyes were all in approbation and admonished themselves, "Our Lord the Dhammaraja is truly the beloved nascent Metteyya. Let us make merit and share out the benefits and let us be firm in the habit of observing the precepts so that we shall be the first to look upon him when the Four Truths are revealed."[41] aruste

The second event described by the Inscription was the arrival of the Tooth Relic from China in 1789. In the *Hmannan* this received the barest of mention, it being related that on 2 May 1789 the King himself went upriver to Ontasin to welcome the Sakyamuni Image and the Tooth Relic replicate sent by the Emperor of China and carried them back in the Yannaing royal boat with a nine-tiered roof. In contrast, the chronicle gave an elaborate account of the arrival in October 1790 of the three granddaughters presented by the Chinese Emperor.[42]

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In the Inscription, the emphasis is on the arrival of the Tooth Relic and, as with the Mahamuni Image, the arrival is placed within the context of known history to extol the glory of Bodawpaya. The Inscription related that the fame of Bodawpaya's virtue could not be contained within Jambudipa and as it spread "like oil over water," "the Utibwa of Tarok, the Khan of Cina"[43] sent to the Golden Feet his three beloved granddaughters, and, yet not content with this, sent also, reverently and affectionately, the Tooth Relic which "Alaungsithu's great-grandfather and grandson [Anawrahta and Narapatisithu]," although reverentially entreating, had not been able to bear back with them.[44] His consideration in this was that the Tooth Relic was only worthy of veneration by

" A deva emergent to whom all white umbrellas bow,
Whose authority, over-soaring, shines resplendent,
A sovereign of the lineage of the Sun
With glory like that of the sun unclouded"

Not made explicit in the Inscription, those who knew their history could recall that the message given to the two kings in the earlier efforts--by Sakka in the first and by the Emperor of China in the second--was that the Buddha had foretold that the Tooth Relic would reside in China for the whole 5,000 years of the Religion.[45]

By its account of the arrival of the Mahamuni Image and the Tooth Relic, the Inscription showed Bodawpaya's glory to be greater than that of Anawrahta who was acknowledged to be one of Myanmar's great kings, Mahasithu himself noting in the *Mahayazawinthit:*

> Anawrahta had 400,000 *kattu* and *lunkyin* boats, 400,000 *hlawga* and *kyawhlei* boats, 36 white elephants, 800,000 black elephants, 8,000,000 horses, 33, 604, 329 warriors. When he travelled within the kingdom, on a right-turning journey he had the Mahagiri spirit on his right, the Thetso spirit on his left, on a left-turning journey, the Minseigyi spirit on his right, the Minseinge spirit on his left.[46]

The Inscription further affirmed Bodawpaya's position as a universal ruler by describing the homage offered to him by other kings. With Majjhimadesa having special significance as the homeland of Buddhism, the Inscription related: "A true descendant of the royal family of Licchavi and

Vesali of Majjhima region was presented and the whole region of 900 *yojana* circuit quaked."[47] It also enumerated the kingdoms from which "noble elephants, noble horses, virgin daughters and gifts were presented without cease:" Kyawpagan (Tongking), Candapuri-Lancang, Ayutthaya, Koli(?), Aceh, Chin, England, Calcutta, Bengal, Golconda, Thiwan Pandyap (?), Akkabat (Cachar), Meitei (Manipur) and other kingdoms. Special mention was also made of the presentation of holy relics and saplings of the southern branch of the Bodhi tree by the King of Sinhala and of two Buddha images and the Brahmin Govinda by the King of Varanasi who "did not dare stand against the spread of the royal glory."

As much a mark of the universal ruler as the homage of kings offering "noble elephants, noble horses and virgin daughters" was the possession of a white elephant, one of the seven treasures of the universal ruler.[48] The association of the white elephant with Buddhist kingship being established by the example of the bodhisattva Vessantara-- at whose birth a female elephant came to leave a baby white elephant--the possession of a white elephant may very well have been a feature of early Myanmar Buddhist kingship, but, once again, textual evidence comes only with the Bagan inscriptions, an inscription of 1270 referring to Nadaungmya or Uccana as "Sritribhavanādityāpavaradhammarājā, Lord of the White Elephant and Other Treasures."[49] Much later, the chronicles of the 18th and 19th centuries emphasized the significance of the white elephant in relation to Myanmar kingship in a number of stories. They related that Thihathu, who founded Pinya in 1312, recovered the corpse of a while elephant floating down the Samon, propped it up erect and mounted it in order to give himself the title. "Lord of the White Elephant", and that his successor Uzana meekly surrendered his throne to his brother Kyawzwa because the latter had acquired five white elephants.[50]

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Bodawpaya acquired his first white elephant in 1784; captured in Myothit forest, the ceremony of "taking possession" was performed on 8 June 1874 and it was given the name Upaw Pyaungmon. There followed a succession of other white elephants: from Shwekya Theinthaung forest in January 1785, from Indauktha forest in May 1785, from Kale in December 1788, from Kale again in January 1791, from Tagaung in

March 1795, and one from Kale and two from Taungdwingyi in October 1796.[51]

The Inscription referred to none of these white elephants but instead mentioned only two later arrivals: a white she-elephant, captured in Minhla and brought to Mingun in September 1804, which was given the name Srimalla-mahāsubhattā and which died in Mingun after only three months; and a white male elephant captured near Nibban village in Hanthawaddy, for which the ceremony of "taking possession" was performed on 5 February 1807 and which was given the name Nibbānapaccayanāgarājā, recalling the name of Vessantara's elephant Paccayanāga.[52]

pes

Court scholars, basing themselves on Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist texts, listed ten varieties of elephants of which the Uposatha and the Chaddanta were the most superior, fit to be mounted only by universal rulers.[53] It was determined that Srimallamahāsubhattā belonged to the Uposatha variety and Nibbānapaccayanāgarājā to the Chaddanta.

The Inscription's account of the white elephants began with Srimallamahāsubhattā, "a gentle mount pure white in colour," an Uposatha elephant whose like "the hundreds of rulers of Sriksetra, Bagan, Myinzaing, Sagaing, Pinya and to Inwa had never possessed;" it related its "changing to a new existence" and cremation in the precincts of the Great Pagoda and the making and setting up of an image "with nothing lacking in its likeness". The Inscription then continued:

The cakravartin Kalingarāja,[54] going through the sky,
Used his goad, unmalicious but with force,
The circle of the Bodhi Tree to overstep
From that blow his elephant died but to earth it did not fall
In an instant, taking its place,
Arrived another flying elephant.
Likewise the glory of the king was such
Without a white elephant he was not to be
With ardent zeal the spirits sent him one
From the village of Nibban it was

jataka
flying over
Bodhi tree

A thoroughbred, young in years,
With a form all resplendent
Ten billion warriors was its strength
A scion of the cloud-treading breed.

It was in this setting of Bodawpaya's attainments that the Inscription placed the casting of the Great Bell. It related that the King, "ruler of two elephants of the flying variety, a gentle Uposatha mount and a young Chaddanta bull, worth kingdoms and to be mounted not by ordinary kings but only by kings of great glory," without any inclination or consideration for worldly affairs and devoted completely to Omniscience, built the Aungmyelawka and other pagodas, the incomparable Great Pagoda at the place where the Tooth Relic had been welcomed,[55] and the 60 cubit high Lion Brothers "towering halfway to the sky," and cast the incomparable Great Bell "so that he might sound the drum of Dhamma".[56] Giving the details of the casting of the Great Bell, the Inscription declared,

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Within the sight of a thousand eyes
No untoward happening there was
E'en though Sakka's help was forthcoming
He forswore that help
And accomplished to completion
A design not that of man.[57]

In its final section the Inscription returned to an account of Bodawpaya's further efforts on behalf of the Dhamma. It related that Bodawpaya, considering that the assertion contained in literary works that the Religion was to last 5,000 years was based not on the Pitakas but on the Commentaries, pondering on the statement in the Cullavagga that 1,000 years would be reduced to 500 if women were to enter the monkhood, pondering also on the statement in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta that so long as moral conduct was maintained there would be no end to arahants, and desiring that the Religion would last an infinity of years, held an assembly of over 160 monks learned in the Scriptures in the pavilion of the Candamuni Image. In that assembly he had "the pure Pitakas of 84,000 sections uttered by the Buddha and endowed with goodness of sound and meaning without any adulteration of the commentaries and sub-commentaries" to be collated and inscribed and then placed in a "golden repository, house of the Dhamma."[58]

The Inscription also recounted Bodawpaya's determination of matters related to monastic discipline on the basis of the Pitakas: that in the prescription that the time from sunrise to sunset was the proper time (*kāla*) for the partaking of food while that from sunset to sunrise was an improper time (*vikāla*), the two periods would be of 30 *nayis* (i.e. 12 hours) each; that the stealing of any thing in excess of 1 *mat* (4.1 gm) in weight was proscribed as an offence by all past Buddhas and by Buddhas to come and was to be punished by removing the offender beyond the bounds of the Religion; that the juice of the toddy palm was from its very beginning an intoxicating drink and was therefore not to be drunk.

The Inscription concluded with a final accolade to the intellectual attainments of Bodawpaya:

> The Dhammaraja, lord of the Great City of Amarapura, lord of the Chaddanta White Elephant, is endowed with such virtues--of which there can be no end to praise--as being able to expunge completely the teachings of the Vinaya, being intimate also with the teachings of the Suttanta, being able to plainly understand abstruse points of the teachings of the highest truth as if they were bright gems laid in the palm of the hand, being able to understand, without instruction, the three Vedas[59] propounded by scholars of secular knowledge, being able by himself, without reliance on a teacher, to consider exhaustively royal traditions, history, jurisprudence, medicaments, mantras and the marks of elephants and horses.

Inscriptions, inscribed on stone and metal, were meant to be enduring public records of acts of merit,[60] but they were also literary creations attracting the talents of court scholars and poets.[61] Since bells are meant to be sounded to announce and share the merit of meritorious acts,[62] this function usually overshadows that of record-keeping and although bells are regularly sounded bell inscriptions are seldom read. Nevertheless, in the form of a less durable palm leaf text whose display of scholarship and literary talent was meant to be enjoyed, even if ephemerally, by a court audience, the Mingun Bell Inscription formed part of the court literature on Myanmar kingship of the late 18th and early 19th century. Often written at the behest of the king by court scholars whose standing at the court could sometimes be affected by their literary efforts,[63] this literature was generally laudatory in nature.[64] Nevertheless this literature drew upon classical Buddhist and secular texts as well as on the traditions of Myanmar history to articulate an idea of kingship and while it undoubtedly idealized the king on the one hand, on the other it also used the weight of texts and traditions to propel the king towards an ideal of kingship.

ENDNOTES

[1] Bodawpaya died on 5 July 1819: the compilation of the *Hmannan* began on 3 May 1829.

[2] *Konbaungzet Mahayazawindawgyi,* (Chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty), Yangon: Ledi Mandaing Press, 1967, II, 209. The twenty years of Bodawpaya's absorption in religious matters noted by the chronicle may be said to have begun when on 20 December 1798 he entrusted the capital and the administration to the Crown Prince and travelled to renovate pagodas and spend the Lent in Toungoo to discuss religious matters with the monks there. He left Toungoo on 8 December 1799 but spent some time building a pagoda (the Inbin Shwegu) at Nyaunggaing and renovating some other pagodas before returning to the capital. *Konbaungzet,* II, 126-127.

[3] The *Hmannan* lists 305 works of merit of Bodawpaya, including the construction of 241 pagodas (of which 230 were built simultaneously in 230 towns in 1783), 13 monasteries and 19 rest-houses, and the renovation of 13 pagodas. The remaining 19 consisted of the construction of various other works (including two roadways and two bridges), the casting of the Candamuni Image and the Great Bell of Mingun, and the repair of six irrigation works. *Konbaungzet,* II, 211-214.

[4] Mingun ("Royal Rest-house") is located on the west bank of the Ayeyarwady about 15 km away from Amarapura. Bodawpaya established his residence on an island, Alegyun ("Middle Island") close to the eastern bank. Hiram Cox, representative of the English East India Company who visited Mingun in February 1797 on the eve of the enshrinement of the relics in the Great Pagoda, provides this description: "His Majesty holds his court at present in a large one-poled tent on a sand-bank in the river opposite but nearly three-fourths of a mile east of the pagoda....Besides the tent he has a temporary bamboo palace and the bank is covered with the huts of his

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particular attendants." Hiram Cox, *Journal of a Residence in the Burmhan Empire* Reprint Gregg International Publishers Ltd, 1971, 64.

[5] Don Stadtner, on the basis of a study of the Royal Orders of Bodawpaya's reign contends that the Great Pagoda was "probably completed in 1812 after 20 years of work". Don Stadtner, "The Enigma of the Mingun Pagoda: Is the Pagoda Really Unfinished?" *Myanmar Two Millennia,* Part 3, Yangon Universities Historical Research Centre, 2000, 94-119. However, the *Hmannan* does not chronicle the installation of the *hti* (umbrella), the offering of almsfood and the ceremony of pouring libation water which usually mark the completion of such a work of merit. The devastating effects of the Great Earthquake of 23 March 1839 on the Great Pagoda are now apparent even to a casual observer, but Henry Burney, English Resident at Inwa from 1830 to 1838, noted that a tremor had previously rocked the Great Pagoda which produced some cracks in the brickwork. Henry Yule, *A Narrative of a Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855,* Reprint, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1968, 170. There were intermittent tremors in the Amarapura area from 17 January 1812 to 27 October 1812. The actual physical and psychological effects of the tremors in relation to the Great Pagoda are unknown but that the Royal Orders do not provide a record of building activity on the Great Pagoda beyond November 1811 may perhaps be significant. The Great Pagoda was only one of several works of merit which Bodawpaya undertook at Mingun. He also built there the Padanetthan Pagoda, begun 5 April 1804 and completed 12 June 1811, which enshrined a marble Buddha Footprint, and cast the 18, 564 kg Candamuni Image on 5 April 1803 and enshrined it there. Moreover, his grandson, the later Bagyidaw, built there the Mahaweiyanbontha Monastery in 1794 and the Shinbyu (now Myatheindan) Pagoda, begun in March 1802 and completed 1807-1808. His son Pyay, younger brother of the Crown Prince, also offered a 5,700 kg bell at Mingun on 14 October 1801. In the context of this religious activity at Mingun, the removal of the Candamuni Image from Mingun to Amarapura on 29 September 1815 perhaps signified Bodawpaya's final abandonment of his great design. *Konbaungzet, passim.*

Quakes

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[6] *Konbaungzet*, I, 556. Royal Order of 17 November 1783. Than Tun, ed., *The Royal Orders of Burma*, Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1983-1990, IV.

[7] *Mandalay Mahamuni tadaing atwinshi kyauksamya* (Inscriptions in the Precincts of the Mahamuni, Mandalay) Vol. I, Yangon Universities Press, 1989, Preface.

[8] *Twinthin Myanmar Yazawinthit* (Twinthin's New Myanmar Chronicle), Vol. I, Yangon Mingala Press, 1968, 2.

[9] The Aungmyelawka Pagoda Inscription. *Myanmasa nyunbaung kyan* (Anthology of Myanmar Literature)Yangon: Newspapers and Periodicals Enterprise, 1991-1993, VI, 179-189. Mahasithu was then known as Mahathinhkaya.

Hsinbyume

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[10] *Konbaungzet*, II, 182-183. An effort was made earlier to transport the Great Bell to the western side in September 1808 by recruiting experts in stevedoring from Yangon but apparently nothing came of the attempt. Royal Order of 17 September 1808. *Royal Orders*, VI, 574-575.

[11] A printed version, which has been used in this paper, is available in *Myanmarsa nyunbaung kyan*, VI, 258-266.

[12] The date was given, according to Bodawpaya's innovation, the Pondaw Calendar, as: "Friday 14th waxing day of Nayon, 14 degrees Candramasa [lunar month], 134 Suddhadin [days elapsed from beginning of 990-day cycle], Terasadhimāsa [13 intercalary months], 26 years of reign."

[13] The *Hmannan* gives an earlier date for the casting of the Great Bell--29 April 1808 (5th waxing day of Kason, Sakkaraj 1170)--as well as a lighter weight, 55,555 viss (90, 721 kg). *Konbaungzet*, II, 167.

[14] In the printed version, the details of the casting of the Great Bell occupy only 14 lines in a total text of 292 lines.

[15] Of Kyansittha's predecessors, Anawrahta (? 1044-? 1077) had the title Māhārājā Sri Aniruddhadeva and Sawlu (? 1077-1084) Sribajrābhavanatribupati. Than Tun, "History of Burma AD 1000-1300", *Bulletin of the Burma Historical Commission*, I, i (June 1960), 43-45. Perhaps the transitional character of Kyansittha's reign is indicated by a votive tablet of his in which his title appears in two forms: Sriyatribhuvanādityadevasya in Nagari script and Sritribhuvanādityadhammarāja in Mon-Myanmar script. U Mya, *Votive Tablets of Burma,* Yangon, Archaeological Survey, 1961, Vol. I, 29.

[16] U Chit Thein, ed. and tr., *Sheihaung Mon kyauksa baunggyok* (Collected Ancient Mon Inscriptions, Yangon, Department of Union Culture, 1965, Mon text 15-17 Myanmar translation 9-10.

[17] The Queen Saw Inscription, AD 1241. *Sheihaung Myanma kyauksamya* (Ancient Myanmar Inscriptions), Yangon, Department of Archaeology, 1972-1998, II, 24. U Chit Thein, *Sheihaung Mon kyauksa,* Mon text 15-17 Myanmar translation 9-10.

[18] The use of *mintaya* began in the early 15th century, e.g. in the Tetnwe Monastery Inscription of 1442 Thirizeyathura, ruler of Taungdwin, referred to his uncle Mohnyin Thado (1426-1439) as *mintaya* (*maṅtryā*) although he also referred to his father-in-law Thihathura (1423-1426) as *tayamingyi* (*tryāmaṅkrī*) and to Hso Ngam Hpa as Maw Mingyi (*maṅkrī*). By the 17th century, the use of *mintaya* had become well established--in the Rajamanicula (Kaunghmudaw) Pagoda Inscription of 1650, Pindale (1648-1661) refers to his great-grandfather Bayinnaung (1551-1582), his grandfather Nyaungyan (1600-1606) and his father Thalun (1629-1648) as *mintaya*

(mañtara:). Tetnwe Monastery Inscription and Rajamanicula Pagoda Inscription. *Sheihaung Myanma kyauksamya,* V, 21-33, 140-162

[19] The Buddhist texts most commonly cited in 18th and 19th century literature were:

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The Mahahamsa Jataka for the ten rules relating to kingship (*rajadhamma*); (1) alms-giving (*dāna*), (2) morality (*sīla*), (3) liberality (*pariccāga*), (4) straightness (*ajjava*), (5) gentleness (*maddava*), (6) self-restriction (*tapo*), (7) non-anger (*akkodha*), (8) non-hurtfulness (*avihimsa*), (9) forbearance (*khantī*) and (10) non-opposition (*avivodhana*)

The Sārandada Sutta for the seven rules of non-diminution (*aparihāniya*): (1) holding continuous assembly, (2) being united in assembly and united in doing what ought to be done, (3) not ordaining that which has not been ordained nor abrogating that which has been ordained, (4) revering the elderly, and considering their words as worthy of heed, (5) not dragging away and oppressing women, (6) revering the spirits and offering them the customary and proper offering, and (7) providing a comfortable residence to *arahants* who have come and who are to come. The rules actually represented the practice of the Licchavi tribe which had a republican form of government rather than kingship.

The Attha Nipāta of the Anguttara Nikāya for the four characteristics of sympathy (*sangaha – vatthāni)*, interpreted in the *Hmannan* as: (1) collecting a tax of one-tenth (*sassamedha*), (2) providing supplies to warriors every six months (*purisamedha*), (3) advancing loans to commoners and recovering only the capital after three years (*sammāpāsa*), and (4) using kindly speech (*vācāpeyya*).

However, it is obvious that the idea of the *dhammaraja* was based upon a much larger corpus.

[20] *Hmannan Mahayazawindawgyi* (Glass Palace Chronicle), Mandalay: Yangon-Mandalay Book Depot, 1956, 32. The account is also given in U Kala, *Mahayazawingyi* (Great Chronicle), Yangon, Burma Research Society, n.d., I, 11-12.

[21] Alaungpaya's six sons by his Chief Queen were:

1. Naungdawgyi, who succeeded Alaungpaya in 1760.
2. Hsinbyushin, who succeeded Naungdawgyi in 1763.
3. Amyint
4. Badon / Bodawpaya
5. Pakhan
6. Pindale

(There was another son between Hsinbyushin and Amyint who died in infancy).

Alaungpaya's wish that his sons succeed one another in order was probably based on the consideration that his second son Hsinbyushin had played a significant part in the military campaigns which led to the establishment of the dynasty and that his eldest son Naungdawgyi did not have a son, that son, Phaungga, being born only in 1761, three years after Alaungpaya's death.

[22] The wheel-treasure is the main treasure (*ratna*) in the seven treasures of the universal ruler, the cakravartin ("turner of the wheel"). The idea is that the wheel-treasure comes of itself to the cakravartin from its home in Cakkadaha and, like the wheel of the sun, travels to all quarters of the earth, the kings of those quarters acclaiming the cakravartin as their sovereign.

[23] Sagaing was also named Jayapura, "City of Victory".

[24] An idea based on the Hindu system of castes (*ksatriya, brahmana, vaisya* and *sudra*), the "four classes"--in Myanmar *min myo, ponna myo, thuhtei thugywe myo* and *thuhsinye myo* -- signified the whole of society.

[25] The practice of morality (*sila*), the development of concentration (*samādhi*) and the development of wisdom (*pañña*).

[26] The bodhisattva Mahājanaka who regained the throne of Mithila of which his father Aritthajanaka had been deprived by his uncle.

[27] Chit Thein, *Sheihaung Mon kyauksa,* Mon text 23, Myanmar translation 14.

[28] Nyaungyangyi's Daughter Inscription, 1242; Thakhin Hpwa Zaw Inscription, 1270; Kyaswa's Aunt Inscription, 1278, *Sheihaung Myanma kyauksamya,* II, 24, III, 60, 115.

[29] *Muddhābhiseka dīpanī*--a treatise written by Mahadhammathingyan U Myat Ne (the former Maungdaung Sayadaw Ñānabhivamsa) on the orders of Bagyidaw and completed on 27 June 1823 to provide a definitive text on the *muddhābhiseka* ceremony--mentioned various *abhiseka* ceremonies: The *sripavesanābhiseka* for reinvigorating power and potency, the *uparajjabhiseka* for installing the Crown Prince, the *maṅgalabhiseka* for taking possession of horses and elephants, the *mahesībhiseka* for installing a Queen, the *jayabhiseka* for winning victory against enemies, the *dvārabhiseka* for taking possession of the palace, the *vivahābhiseka* for celebrating a marriage the *āyubhiseka* for longevity, the *mahābhiseka* for prosperity, the *sakalābhiseka* for making the kingdom peaceful and pleasant, the *rājābhiseka* for the installation of the King, with the *muddhābhiseka,* the anointing of the head with three conch shells, as a special form of the *rājābhiseka.* It also noted that the *muddhābhiseka* was basic and primary, being the prerequisite for the performance of the other *abhiseka* ceremonies. Sheihaung Thuteithi ta-u (U Tun Yi), *Maungdaung Hsayagyi Muddhābhiseka dīpanī hkaw muddhabeiktheik sadan.* (Maungdaung

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Sayadaw's *Muddhabhiseka* treatise entitled *Muddhābhiseka dīpanī*). Mimeograph, Yangon, Seinpanmyaing Literature House.

[30] *Konbaungzet,* I, 545-553.

[31] Before Bodawpaya, Hsinbyushin had undergone three *abhiseka* ceremonies, but they were different ceremonies--the *rājābhiseka* ceremony on 16 May 1764, 174 days after his accession, the *jayabhiseka* ceremony on 3 January 1768 to celebrate his victory against Ayutthaya, and the *sripavesanābhiseka* ceremony on 2 June 1775 to ward off the danger posed by the transition of influence from the Amyeitta *dhat* to the Kawli *dhat.* *Konbaungzet,* I, 352-3, 418, 489-490. Bodawpaya underwent a third *abhiseka* ceremony, a *sakalābhiseka* ceremony on 9 May 1816 in conjunction with the completion of the reconstruction of the palace and other buildings. *Konbaungzet,* II, 196-197.

[32] *Konbaungzet,* I, 561-562. For a detailed study of Bodawpaya's *muddhābhiseka* ceremonies and their political significance, see Ryūji Okudaira, "Features of the Theravada State Structure with Special Reference to the Muddha Beiktheik ("Supreme Coronation Ceremony") as observed by King Badon in Eighteenth Century Myanmar, "*Myanmar Two Millennia* Part 3, Yangon, Universities Historical Research Centre, 2000, 120-132.

[33] The five qualities were: of pure birth (*sujāta*), a student of the Vedas (*ajjhāyaka*), handsome (*abhirūpa*), of good conduct (*sīlava*) and clever (*pandita*)

[34] The threat, "Your head shall split into seven pieces (*muddhā sattadhā phaleyya*)" had a scriptural base, occurring in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Samyutta Nikāya.*

[35] Aungmyelawka Pagoda Inscription *Myanmasa nyunbaung kyan,* VI, 181.

[36] The Ton-Yon controversy began in the late Nyaungyan period during the reign of Sane (1698-1714), the main point at issue being the manner in which novices were to wear the robe in making the round for almsfood. One opinion was for wearing the upper robe to cover both shoulders (*thingan yon*), the other--attributed to Gunabhilankara of Ton village--was to wear the robe to cover just the left shoulder (*dugot tin*). The *dugot tin* gained ascendancy during the reign of Alaungpaya when he made one of its champions, Atula Sayadaw Yasa, his preceptor. This was reversed by Singu who, following a disputation between the two sides, ruled in favour of the *thingan yon* on 17 May 1780. But the *dugot tin* continued in their practice and on his accession, Bodawpaya sent Mahasithu U Tun Nyo to the *dugot tin* monks to enquire whether the practice had a scriptural basis and, on being informed that it had not, issued an order on 3 June 1782 confirming the *thingan yon* practice. However Atula Sayadaw Yasa, who had been expelled from the capital during the reign of Hsinbyushin for an ecclesiastical offence but continued to have a following, maintained that the *dugot tin* practice was supported by a text, the *Culaganthi.* He was examined by a panel of monks in April 1784 and on its being

established that the *Culaganthi* was not an authoritative text, he and his followers were made to leave the monkhood and variously punished. *Konbaungzet,* I, 517; Mahadhammathingyan; *Sasanalankāra sadan* (The Adornment of the Religion) Yangon: Hanthawaddy Pitakat Press, 1956, 180-182; 204-206; Srisobhana, *Mahādvāra Nikāya Sasanavamsa dīpanī* (A Religious History of the Mahadwara Sect), Yangon: Ledi Mandaing Press, 1974, *passim;* Royal Orders of 3 June 1782 and 21, 23 and 25 April 1784. Than Tun, *Royal Orders* IV, 235-237, 325-327.

[37] These texts relate to monastic discipline--the Aggikkhandopama Sutta teaches that it is better to lie down on raging flames than to live as a monk guilty of evil conduct, the Bhikkhupatimokkha and Bhikkunīpatimokkha give the set of 227 rules to be observed by monks and nuns, and the Vibhanga is an extended treatise on these rules.

[38] The *Hmannan* records the sending of six monks each to the Shan principalities, to the four cities of Rakhine, and to Pathein (Bassein), Mottama (Martaban), Dawei (Tavoy) and Myeit (Mergui). But the numbers are confusing: 39 destinations are enumerated, the total number is given as 56, and the number of monks sent is given as 246 (which at six to a place would account for only 41 places). *Konbaungzet,* II, 18-21. Maungdaung Sayadaw Ñānabhivamsa's listing in response to a royal request of 27 March 1792 had 42 destinations and 282 monks--six to each of the 38 destinations in the Shan and Mon countries and 54 to the four cities of Rakhine. *Ameidawhpyei* (Answers to Royal Questions), Mandalay, Zabu Meithswei Pitakat Bookshop, 1961, 457-459.

[39] *Konbaungzet,* II, 18. The act recalls the episode of the arrival of the Tooth Relic from Sri Lanka at Bagan during the reign of Anawrahta. According to the *Hmannan,* King Dhatusena of Sri Lanka, in sending the Tooth Relic replicate to Anawrahta, bore on his head the casket which contained it and went into the water up to his neck and, in like manner, Anawrahta went into the Ayeyarwady up to his neck in order to receive it. *Hmannan,* I, 259-263.

Anawra
tooth

[40] Elsewhere, in a Royal Order of 1810, the account appears as a foretelling by the Buddha. After having cast the Image, Candasuriya asked the Buddha whether the Image would remain in Rakhine for the whole period of the Buddha's Religion and the Buddha replied, "The Mahamuni Image will not long reside in this place. The deva Dhammadinna [a Dhammadinna who was a lay follower of the Buddha and came to him at Isipatana with 500 *upasakas* is mentioned in the Dhammadinna Sutta] who now comes to me is the future Metteyya, my younger brother. He will later descend from Tusita heaven to the world of men and shall become a king exalted in good fortune and merit whose merit shines bright, the lord of tens of noble horses and elephants. Borne by that King, the Image shall reside in the eastern country and shall be reverenced by the King who sounds the drum of Dhamma like myself." Royal Order of 23 June 1810. Than Tun, *Royal Orders,* 768-769.

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[41] The revelation of the Four Truths--of suffering (*dukkha*), the origin of suffering (*samudaya*), the extinction of suffering (*nirodha*) and the way to the extinction of suffering (*magga*)--would signify the enlightenment of the new Buddha: Metteyya.

[42] *Konbaungzet,* II, 61, 64-66.

[43] "The Utibwa of Tarok" was the common expression for the Emperor of China in the 19th century, the "Khan of Cina" a literary embellishment recalling the usage of the early 14th century in which Thihathu of Pinya (Sritribhavanādityapavarasihasvra in the inscriptions) was lauded as the victor over the "1,200,000 warriors of the Khan." Athinhkaya Monastery Inscription, 1303, Queen Yadanabon Inscription, 1332, Shwekyaung (Golden Monastery) Inscription, 1335. *Sheihaung Myanma kyauksa mya,* II, 214, 327, 348.

[44] U Kala's *Mahayazawingyi* and the *Hmannan* have Anawrahta and Alaungsithu journeying to China to obtain the Tooth Relic, but Mahasithu in the *Mahayazawinthit* apportioned some of Alaungsithu's exploits, including the journey to China, to Narapatisithu. Perhaps it may be of significance or not, but in the Shweyinmaw Pagoda Inscription Mahasithu drew a parallel between Bodawpaya and Narapatisithu in their coming to the throne at the age of 37. The Shweyinmaw Pagoda Inscription. *Myanmasa nyunbaung,* VI, 199.

[45] U Kala, *Mahayazawingyi,* I, 184-188, 231-232.

[46] *Twinthin Myanma Yazawinthit,* I, 95.

[47] Vesali, identified with the modern Basarh in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, was the capital of Vajji (Vriji) which was formed by the union of several tribes including the Licchavis. Bimbisāra, King of Magadha and patron of the Buddha, established a matrimonial alliance with Vesali. In Bodawpayas's time Vesali was identified with Assam whose ruler presented to Bodawpaya a 14 year old daughter who arrived in Amarapura on 5 July 1797. She was given the title Srīmahāvimaladevi and Mogaung for her sustenance and bore Bodawpaya a son Thadohpya who later was also given Mogaung for his sustenance. *Konbaungzet,* II, 118-120.

[48] The seven treasures (*ratna*) of the cakravartin, as given in the *Digha Nikāya,* are (1) the wheel (*cakka*) out of Cakkadaha, (2) the elephant (*hatthi*) of the Uposatha or Chaddanta variety, (3) the horse (*assa*) of the Valāhaka race, (4) the gem (*mani*) from Vepulla mountain, (5) the woman (*itthi*) from the royal family of Madda or Uttavakuru, (6) the treasurer (*gahapati*) and (7) the advisor (*parināyaka*).

[49] Thakhin Hpwa Saw Inscription, 1270. *Sheihaung Myanma kyauksa mya,* III, 58.

[50] U Kala, *Mahayazawingyi,* I, 318, 326-327; *Twinthin Myanma Yazawinthit,* I, 170, 179; *Hmannan,* I, 371, 378-379.

[51] *Konhaungzet, passim.*

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[52] The details of the arrival of the two elephants are given in *Konbaungzet* II, 136-138, 139-156.

[53] The ten varieties of elephant's were Kalāvaka, Gangeyya, Pandara, Kamba, Pingala, Gandha, Maṅgala, Hema, Uposatha and Chaddanta, with Kālāvaka the basest and Chaddanta the most superior. The Kālavaka had the strength of ten men; the strength increased tenfold with each succeeding superior variety, so that the Chaddanta had the strength of 10 billion men. The Uposatha and the Chaddanta were alike in standing "sevenfold firm" (*sattapatittha*)--with tusks, tail, trunk and four legs touching the ground--and in having a completely white body, with face, neck and legs red "like the rising sun". But there were a number of physical differences distinguishing the two: the Uposatha had eyes like pearl and its must was like fresh milk, the Chaddanta had eyes like rubies, its must was like sandal water, and its tusks were of six colours--blue-back, yellow, red, white, crimson and shining--the name Chaddanta being interpreted sometimes as "six-tusked" and sometimes as "with six-rayed tusks". The habitat of both Uposatha and Chaddanta was in the vicinity of Lake Mandākinī which lay to the north of Suvannapabbata, the closest of the seven mountain ranges around Himavant--the Uposatha in Samakannika Forest to the south, and the Chaddanta in Sudassana Forest to the west of the Lake. Sheihaung Thuteithi ta-u (U Tun Yi), *Myanma nanthon hsin—kyanganla hsin* (Myanmar Royal Elephants—the Elephant According to Scripture) Mimeograph, Yangon, Myanma hmu beikman sapeiban, 1-2, 22-23, 36-37.

elephants

[54] King of Dantapura. The story of his unsuccessful attempt to fly over the Bodhi Tree is given in the Kalingabodhi Jātaka.

temple? hill?

[55] Not mentioned in the *Hmannan*, the Inscription related that, in welcoming the Tooth Relic at Mingun, Bodawpaya placed a pile of rocks on a hill to mark the site of a Tooth Relic-Welcoming Pagoda (Swedawkyo zeidi). The Tooth Relic was later enshrined in the Mingun Pagoda on 12 March 1797. *Konbaungzet*, II, 104.

tooth relic

[56] The phrase "sounding the drum of Dhamma" occurs elsewhere in a Royal Order of Bodawpaya where the Buddha foretells that the Mahamuni Image would be reverenced by "the king who sounds, the drum of Dhamma like myself". See above note 40. Much earlier, Kyansittha in his Kyaikte and Kyaiktalan Pagoda Inscriptions of 1098 had the Buddha foretell that he (Kyansittha) would make "the drum of Dhamma sound loudly everywhere. Chit Thein, *Sheihaung Mon kyauksa* Mon text 46-101, Myanmar translation 51, 53.

[57] Sakka is usually attributed a central role in the great works undertaken by kings, such as the foundation of Sriksetra and the casting of the Mahamuni Image. In the building of the Great Pagoda too, it was believed that Sakka rendered assistance, providing two bronze relic chambers the act commemorated by an inscription of four syllables on the Pagoda, *sa-sam-pū-ka*, signifying:

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sakkodevā namindo ham

sambuddhassa hitesino

pujam loha itthakāya

karodhi rājatutthiya

(I Sakka, ruler of the devas, offer bronze bricks to the King so that he might reverence the Buddha who seeks the welfare of beings). *Konbaungzet*, II, 103.

[58] An assembly of 162 monks collating various texts decided on a text of the Pitakas which was transcribed by a team of 85 scribes and checked by 62 monks. The work of transcription began on 18 February 1806 and was carried on in the Candamuni pavilion at Mingun. While the work was still in progress, Bodawpaya issued an order on 10 March 1806 for the scribes to be housed all together in a nearby place and for them to adhere strictly to the hours of work. The transcription was finished on 19 April 1806. Altogether 27 texts were transcribed, the Pitakas in 57 fascicles and Kaccayana texts in 19, on a total of 9,506 palm leaves. *Ameidawhpyei,* 680; Royal Order of 10 March 1906, ThanTun, , *Royal Orders,* VI 824.

[59] The Rg-veda, Sāma-veda and Yajur-veda.

[60] The function of record in the Mingun Bell Inscription is well indicated not only in its account of the casting of the Bell but also in the description of the boundaries of the territories of Hpaunglin and Salin assigned for the sustenance of Nibbānapaccayanāgarāja and in its final statement, "This is the record (*mawgun*) of the Great Bell."

ck.

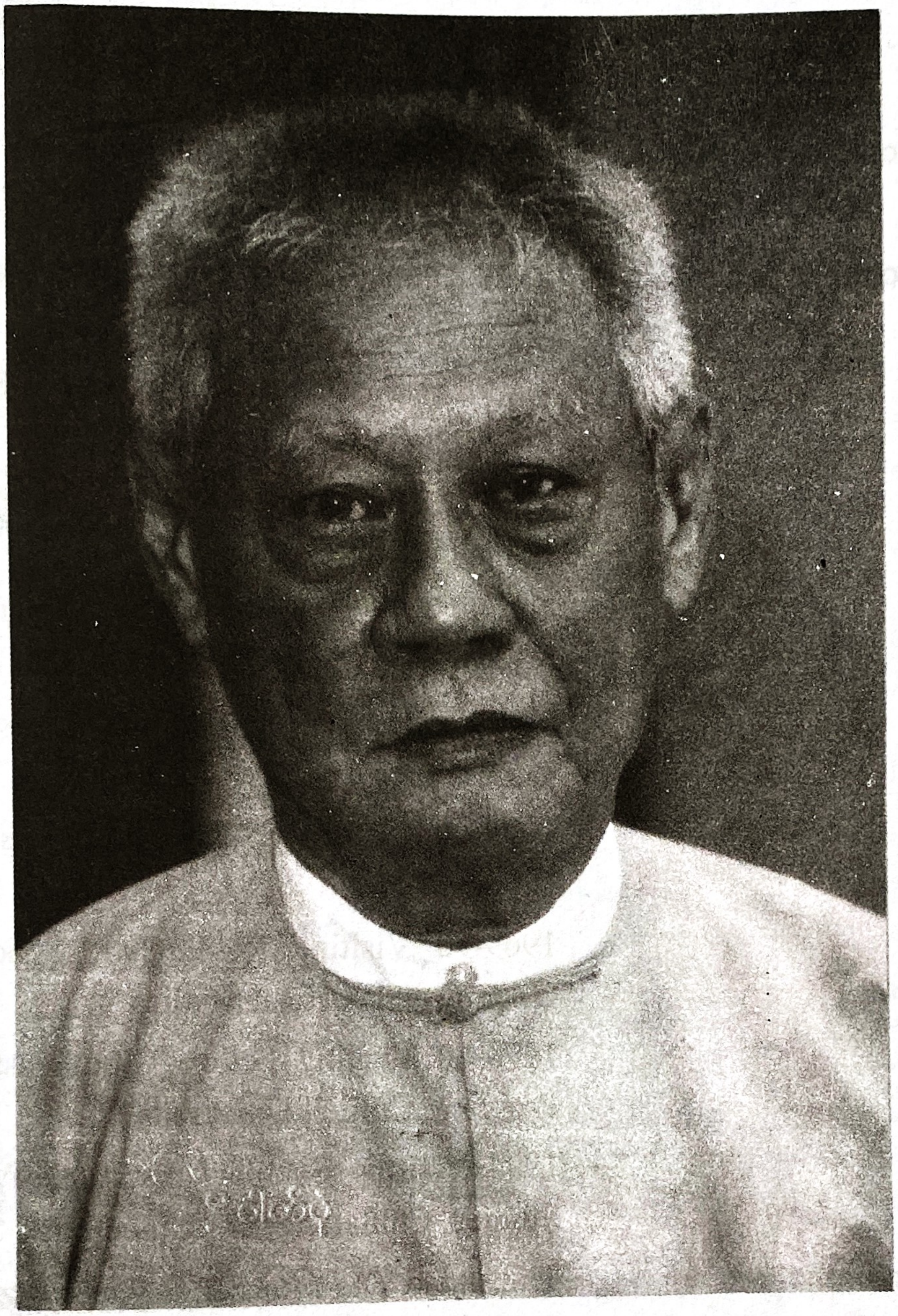
[61] The first lithic inscription combining prose and verse was the Kandawgyi Pagoda Inscription of 1266. For a listing of these inscriptions of mixed prose and verse in the 14th – 16th century, see Than Tun, "Myanma history: A humanities approach," *Asian Research Trends*, 4 (1994), 67-68. Perhaps one of the best known of literary inscriptions is the Yadanabeikman Monastery Inscription of 1497 whose author was the poet Mahasilavamsa (1453-1520).

[62] This function is well indicated, for instance, in the inscription of the bell offered to the Mingun Pagoda by Prince Pyay in1808--"so that the multitude come unceasingly day and night to visit and present offerings at the Great Pagoda built at Mingun and enshrining many relics to endure until the end of the Religion may strike and sound [the bell] and share their merit." The Mingun Bell Inscription of Prince Pyay, *Myanmasa nyunbaung,* VI, 256.

[63] One of the best-known examples of the use of a literary composition for a political end is that of Atwinwun Nemyominhlamahanawrahta U Paw U (1760-1844) who, exiled to Hsenwi by Bodawpaya *ca* 1812, wrote a "wrath-appeasing" (*amyet-hpyei*) poem in order to return to the King's good graces. U Aung, *U Paw U Shaukhton*

(The Supplications of U Paw U), Mandalay, Mandalay-Yangon Pitaka Bookshop, 1962, I, 117-124. The poem is also given in *Myanmasa nyunbaung*, II, 229-231.

[64] A notable example of the laudatory literature bearing on kingship is provided by the *Rājādhirājhavilāsīnī*, a work in Pali written by Maungdaung Sayadaw Ñānabhivamsa (1753-1833), of which Bode has remarked, "The Rājādhirājavilāsīnī is precious as a specimen of the 'elegant scholarship' of the time....The author find occasion to speak of everything that could shed glory on the 'righteous king' as a benefactor of his people and of religion". Mabel Haynes Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma,* Reprint (Yangon: Burma Research Society, 1965), 79. The text of the *Rāyādhirājavilāsinī* with an English translation is available in Maung Tin, " Rāyādhirājavilāsinī or the Manifestation of the King of Kings," *Journal of the Burma Research Society,* IV, i (1914), 7-12.



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Myanmar Historical Commission

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Secretary of the
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